

**Amendments to the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-13 (cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) A method for transparently exchanging data packets ~~of with a~~ packet-oriented network by a network node device, network the packet oriented network ~~comprised via which a number of~~ at least one network element elements connected to and a the network node device, each network element having a unique address within the packet-oriented network, the network node device utilizing the method comprising:

~~device are connected, the network elements having~~  
~~unique addresses only within the packet-oriented network,~~  
~~the packet-oriented network connected to an external device by the network node device,~~  
and

~~the unique address of a network element converted into an address valid for the external device by the network node device, the method comprising:~~

~~setting up a connection between a first network element and the external device; and~~  
~~verifying message header entries of data packets exchanged between the external device~~  
and the first network element; element, wherein

~~if a message header entry characterizing an expanded packet-oriented protocol is~~  
~~detected, establishing a temporarily transparent connection is established between the first~~  
network element and the external device;

determining whether a message header entry characterizing an expanded packet-oriented protocol is within the message header entries; and

transferring the unique address of the first network element to the external device without converting the unique address of the first network element after a message header entry characterizing an expanded packet-oriented protocol is determined to be within the message header entries. device, and wherein

~~the unique address of the first network element is transferred to the external device without being converted by the network node device.~~

15. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 14, wherein the unique address of the first network element is assigned by the external device while the connection is set up between the first network element and the external device.

16. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 14, wherein a modulation/demodulation device connects ~~is arranged between~~ the external device to ~~and~~ the network node device such that the network node device exchanges data packets of the packet-oriented network with the external device via the modulation/demodulation device.

17. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 15, wherein a modulation/demodulation device connects ~~is arranged between~~ the external device to ~~and~~ the network node device such that the network node device exchanges data packets of the packet-oriented network with the external device via the modulation/demodulation device.

18. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 14, wherein a verification is carried out before the transparent connection for the first network element is set up to ~~up, to~~ determine whether a transparent connection ~~connection of the same type~~ already exists for a least one other network element, ~~element or for the network node device~~.

19. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 15, wherein a verification is carried out before the transparent connection for the first network element is set up to ~~up, to~~ determine whether a transparent connection ~~connection of the same type~~ already exists for a least one other network element, ~~element or for the network node device~~.

20. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 16, wherein a verification is carried out before the transparent connection for the first network element is set up to ~~up, to~~ determine whether a transparent connection ~~connection of the same type~~ already exists for a least one other network element, ~~element or for the network node device~~.

21. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 14, wherein a maximum number of transparent connections is defined depending on ~~the specifications~~ a specification of the external device.

22. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 15, wherein a maximum number of transparent connections is defined depending on ~~the specifications~~ a specification of the external device.

23. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 21 further comprising rejecting an establishment of the transparent connection if another network element already has a transparent connection established. 21, wherein ~~the establishment of the transparent connection of the first network element is rejected.~~

24. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 21 further comprising cancelling an existing transparent connection and subsequently establishing a transparent connection between the external device and a second network element. 21, wherein ~~an existing connection to a network element is canceled and the transparent connection of a further network element is then established.~~

25. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 14 further comprising terminating the transparent connection after a connection release request is detected. 14, wherein ~~an existing transparent connection is terminated as soon as a connection release request is detected.~~

26. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 25, wherein the connection release request is triggered when ~~a predefined time period, during which no data packets have~~

been exchanged according to the expanded packet-oriented protocol within a predefined time period. ~~protocol, has been exceeded.~~

27. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 14, wherein the communication of the at least one network element ~~elements~~ with ~~one another and/or with the~~ network node device is ~~alternatively~~ effected either according to ~~the~~ Internet protocol or according to the PPPoE communication protocol.

28. (Currently Amended) A network node element for supporting a transparent exchange of data packets ~~packets~~, comprising:

at least one first network interface configured to connect ~~to a packet-oriented network connecting a plurality of network to a packet-oriented network;~~ ~~elements, wherein the network elements are allocated addresses only within the network;~~

at least one second network interface configured to connect to an external device;

~~at least one routing unit and for converting of the unique address of a network element into an address valid for the external device;~~

at least one monitoring unit operatively connected to at least one of the at least one first network interface and the at least one second network interface; the at least one monitoring unit configured to establish a temporarily transparent connection between at least one network element of the packet-oriented network and an external device; for monitoring message header entries of the data packets exchanged between the external device and a first network element, wherein the monitoring unit is configured to detect a message header entry characterizing an

~~expanded packet-oriented protocol and to establish a temporarily transparent connection between the first network element and the external device, and whereby no address conversation of an address allocated to the first network element by the external device for the duration of the transparent connection is performed.~~

wherein the network node element is configured to not convert a unique address of any network element that is allocated to that network element by the external device for the duration of a temporarily transparent connection established between that network element and the external device.

29. (Currently Amended) The network node element according to claim 28, wherein the network node element is ~~configured as a router.~~

30. (Original) The network node element according to claim 28, wherein the at least one monitoring unit controls at least one bridging device of the network node element. ~~device.~~

31. (Original) The network node element according to claim 29, wherein the at least one monitoring unit controls at least one bridging device of the network node element. ~~device.~~

32. (New) The method of claim 14 wherein the expanded packet-oriented protocol is PPPoE.

33. (New) The method of claim 28 wherein the expanded packet-oriented protocol is PPPoE.

34. (New) The method according to claim 14, wherein the at least one network element is comprised of a plurality of network elements and communication of the network elements is effected according to at least one of Internet protocol and PPPoE communication protocol.

35. (New) The network node element according to claim 28 wherein the at least one second network interface is comprised of a modem connected to the network node element.